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DEPARTMENT FOR S/CRS (AMBASSADOR PASCUAL), EUR/ERA,
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CARLOS PASCUAL MEETS IN BRUSSELS TO
FIND EU LINKAGES ON CRISIS RESPONSE

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Classified By: USEU Political Military Officer,
Jeremy Brenner, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Carlos Pascual, Coordinator of S/CRS, held a two-day series of meetings with EU officials in the Council and the Commission to explore areas for cooperative efforts on crisis response. In the meetings, Ambassador Pascual explained the mandate and structure of his office and emphasized the US desire to work multilaterally on effective crisis response. The reception was enthusiastic, with Javier Solana and others urging establishment of concrete initiatives for U.S.- EU coordination and cooperation on stabilization and reconstruction issues. Some of the areas under consideration include early warning, exchange visits, gaming exercises, development of crisis-response capabilities, and policy coordination on conflict prevention. Several EU interlocutors suggested that a joint action plan in this area could be the focus of a joint declaration for the June U.S.- EU Summit. The EU's crisis response mechanisms are evolving quickly, with a growing capability to deploy limited numbers of rule of law trainers, civil administrators, and police trainers. Delineation of responsibilities between the Council and the Commission will remain a constraint on EU capabilities for some time, as will the requirement for consensus decision-making. End summary.

Early Warning

2. (C) Ambassador Carlos Pascual, Coordinator of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization held a series of meetings with EU officials February 16-18 designed to explore areas for cooperation on crisis response. He was joined in a number of his sessions by Acting National Intelligence Council Chairman, David Gordon. In a meeting with EU Council Policy Planning Director Christoph Heusgen and regional experts, Ambassador Pascual explained that the purpose of his visit was to give substance to the shared US-EU commitment to strengthen coordination on crisis response and stabilization. One of the initiatives he hoped could emerge from the meetings was an enhanced coordination on watch lists of countries at risk of conflict or instability.

Identifying Risk Factors

3. (C) Heusgen emphasized the need to move from early warning to early action in order to prevent conflict and coordinate crisis and post-conflict responses. He explained that the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) agrees on a watch list of emerging or existing crises every six months. The list is circulated to the member states, which have a much greater capacity for explicit country and regional analysis than the EU institutions. National external services contribute to the creation of the list. The EU watch list is based on pre-identified key risk factors, and a checklist, which focuses on root causes of instability. These factors include: legitimacy of the government, humanitarian conditions, economic factors, rule of law, and regional stability. The watch list focuses on early warning versus existing peacekeeping operations and is "depoliticized" until it reaches the PSC. The countries at risk are not identified in any priority order. As the EU structures develop, the list may become the basis for contingency planning within the EU Military Staff and the civilian-military planning cell now taking shape within the Council General Secretariat.

Making a Policy Impact

4. (C) Acting NIC Chairman Gordon gave an overview of the methodology used in creating the US list, noting that the

NIC tries to identify not only the risk factors, but also the immediacy of the risk and potential triggers for crisis. The US watch list is designed to bring countries at risk to the attention of senior policymakers, and is aimed at having a policy impact. As a practical example of concrete areas for cooperation, the US and EU experts shared their assessments of the risk factors and current conditions in Bolivia and the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Positive Reception from the Political and Security
Committee

15. (C) Ambassador Pascual and his delegation were then invited to an informal working lunch hosted by the Luxembourg Presidency to meet with the Ambassadors of the Political and Security Committee. Luxembourg Ambassador Paul Duhr termed the trip a "very important visit," and called for the US and the EU to share experiences and identify fields of cooperation prior to the US-EU Summit planned for later this year. After an overview by Ambassador Pascual on the mandate and structure of S/CRS, the questions from the Ambassadors reflected an interest in concrete cooperation. There was broad agreement on the need for an integrated approach to crisis response, focusing on the need for civilian capabilities in areas such as democratization, building civil society, security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). Ambassador Pascual pointed out the difficulty of reintegrating demobilized soldiers in countries - such as Afghanistan -- where the unemployment rate is above 50 percent, and there are no economic prospects. Several questions focused on the civilian-military relationship and the chain of command for integrated operations. The Italian Ambassador noted the need for Gendarmerie forces to bridge the security gap between the short-term military phase and the longer-term civilian stabilization and reconstruction programs, and asked if the US had plans to develop such a capacity. Regional capacity-building, early warning, and contingency planning were all identified as priority areas for cooperative efforts. In this session, as in others, Ambassador Pascual urged that cooperative efforts be undertaken to meet a practical need, rather than simply as a "deliverable" for a summit.

Solana Pull-Aside

16. (C) At the conclusion of the lunch, EU High Representative Javier Solana emerged from an adjacent meeting room and invited Ambassador Pascual to join him for a brief discussion. Solana was direct in expressing his belief that conflict prevention and post-conflict response is an important area and fertile ground for U.S.- EU cooperation that can have a real and positive impact. He asked Pascual to work closely with the Council Secretariat to develop a concrete and substantive initiative to deepen joint EU-US efforts in conflict management and response. (Note: Solana has shown a considerable personal interest in Ambassador Pascual's visit, receiving a series of pre-briefs on possible areas for cooperation and planning for the visit. End note)

Civilian Crisis Management

17. (C) In a subsequent meeting with Pieter Feith, Deputy Director-General for European Security and Defense Policy within the Council Secretariat, Ambassador Pascual began to probe the structures and capacities of the EU in crisis management. As was clear in every session, the EU's crisis response mechanisms are evolving at a rapid pace. There are, however, complicated institutional divisions between the Commission and the Council with respect to competencies and budgets. The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) is reserved to the Council, and matters of defense policy require consensus agreement among the member states. Crisis response is largely the competence of the Council, which has a very limited budget to fund missions, and therefore draws heavily from seconded member-state personnel to staff missions. Other areas, such as humanitarian assistance are run by the Commission, using common funding mechanisms with varying voting rules. As a result, integrated crisis response operations, drawing on military resources as well as humanitarian programs, will be complex. The civilian-military planning cell within the Military Staff of the Council General Secretariat may try to bridge some of these issues by including Commission representatives in the planning.

Deployable Resources

18. (C) Feith explained that the civ-mil cell will be operational by April 1. It is to consist of military and civilian planners, as well as a staff of "housekeepers" who would form the key staff of an operations center in the event it is activated. As of January 2006, the cell is to have the capacity to stand up the operations center for use in the event that no National HQ is available to run an operation. (See reftels for further details.) Under the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 the EU member states have set for themselves, the EU will have deployable capabilities in police, rule of law, civil administration, civil protection, and monitoring. These instruments could be deployed in support of an EU Special Representative or could be put at the disposal of the United Nations as part of a broader stabilization mission. The operations center could be employed to run a purely civilian operation, or to support a national HQ in a military operation. (Note: The EU has already undertaken military stabilization, rule of law, police, and monitoring missions in several countries in addition to assuming command of the military PKO in Bosnia. A security sector reform mission to Kinshasa is now being deployed. End note.) Feith and Ambassador Pascual agreed to reconvene for a working lunch in order to discuss specific and concrete areas for cooperation.

EU Council/ Transatlantic Relations

19. (C) Ambassador Pascual subsequently met with Jim Cloos, Director for Transatlantic Relations and the United Nations in the Council Secretariat. Cloos reiterated the desire to find areas for cooperation between the EU and the US in crisis response. He pointed out that the EU is working with the UN on planning, training and exchanges of lessons learned. He said that the EU missions in rule of law or civil administration are designed either as "strengthening" operations in countries where there are functioning but weak institutions, or as "substitution" missions in cases where the local structures are no longer functional. In strengthening operations, monitors or mentors are placed within the local structures to provide guidance or training. In substitution missions, EU civil administrators would ensure the issuance of critical documents or assure the preservation of vital records in cases where the local capacity had ceased to exist. Cloos noted that the proposed Constitutional Treaty now under consideration by member states would create an EU external service, and would break down some of the barriers between the Commission and the Council. These steps would improve decision-making within the EU and increase its capacity for external action. Cloos said that the EU structures - both Council and Commission -- are open to all proposals for cooperation or coordination in this field.

European Commission External Relations Directorate

110. (C) In a later meeting, Lodewijk Briet, Director of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Directorate in the External Relations Directorate General of the European Commission, gave some additional details concerning the respective roles of the Commission and the Council in crisis management. Briet pointed out that the Commission and the Council do joint fact-finding, and that his directorate ensures Commission input into the ESDP planning process. He observed that the Commission also has the authority to dispense funds - including development funds -- which the Council lacks. He cited the example of a 300,000 Euro expenditure for ammunition for the Congolese police, which was made from the CFSP budget. Ordinarily, the Commission is prohibited from spending funds on military operations, but in this case it was authorized by the Ministers of the Member States, being deemed a critical element in stabilization efforts. Briet also pointed out that while EU Special Representatives report to Javier Solana, they are paid by the Commission and any expenses - such as an armored car are covered by CFSP funds. According to Briet, the CFSP budget -- currently 63 million Euros annually - will double during the period 2007-2013.

Engaging the UN

111. (C) In a subsequent session, Giancarlo Chevallard, Deputy Director of the CFSP Directorate, cited a need for streamlining internal EU procedures in order to create a more effective crisis response capability. He said that there was also a need to build capacity in new areas such as constitutional experts. Chevallard put the EU's crisis management efforts into broader context, noting that there would be a series of meetings with UN Deputy Secretary General Frechette in a few days. He said he welcomed

proposals to reinforce and coordinate EU and US capabilities with the UN, and to make national capabilities available to the EU. (Note: Under the EU's Concept of the Use of Force, a UN Security Council Resolution is a virtual pre-requisite for ESDP operations with a military component. End note). Ambassador Pascual called for the establishment of a strong and effective common agenda for concrete ideas for EU-US initiatives linked to national security.

Counter-Terrorism

¶12. (C) Lars-Erik Lundin, Head of the Security Policy Unit within the CFSP Directorate of the European Commission, told Ambassador Pascual his unit would detach officers to serve in the civ-mil planning cell once it is operational. In addition to representing the Commission in formulating security and defense policy, Lundin's office is focused on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation issues, as well as with civil protection and evacuation operations. Identification of victims also falls under his responsibility. His office works closely with the EU's satellite imagery center in Torrejon, Spain, contributing to situational awareness of evolving crises. Lundin's assessment of future ESDP operations was that the EU shouldn't plan to go anywhere "too difficult," and he cited a reluctance to go too far from the EU's neighborhood.

Making an Agenda for Concrete Follow-up

¶13. (C) In a working lunch session with Pieter Feith, agreement was reached to create a working agenda for follow-up. Claude-France Arnould, Director of the Defense Aspects Directorate under Feith will travel to Washington March 21 for follow-up meetings with Ambassador Pascual and DoD and State officials. Further preparatory sessions will be held via video-conference between policymakers and regional experts. Areas under consideration for cooperation include early warning and response, joint efforts to build capacities (including gaming exercises, exchange visits, and cross training), conflict prevention policy coordination, and building international capacity.

Comment

¶14. (C) Ambassador Pascual's enthusiastic reception by the EU is a reflection of several factors. They believe it recognizes the EU's nascent efforts to create a crisis management capability of its own, and indicates a growing U.S. recognition of the importance of "soft power" instruments in dealing with global instability. They see the U.S. initiative embodied in S/CRS as a mechanism to build links with the US and to coordinate efforts in an area where we can make a concrete difference, as well as plant the seeds of an intelligence-sharing structure.

¶15. (C) Despite their desire for a bilateral relationship, the EU's actual abilities on the ground will be constrained by unresolved questions of institutional responsibility between the Commission and the Council. The scope of EU ambitions will also be limited by a resource limits, personnel, and political focus. Operations requiring tough political decisions will also be constrained because EU crisis response operations will require -- for the foreseeable future - decision-making by consensus. The EU will likely continue to face limited capacities, the need for a UN-mandate to legitimize their efforts, and fears of being "dragged" into open-ended commitments. For these reasons, EU involvement in any serious stabilization operation is likely to be limited and concentrated on low-intensity conflicts, with NATO remaining indispensable for planning, logistics, and other support for more difficult tasks.

¶16. (U) S/CRS has cleared this message.

McKinley